

REMARKS

BY

ANN BROWN

CHAIRMAN

U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION
TO

European Consumer Safety Association (ECOSA)
Commission De La Securite Des Consommateurs (CSC)

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BONJOUR.

WINSTON CHURCHILL HAD A GREAT REPUTATION
NOT ONLY AS A STATESMAN BUT AS ONE WHO LIKED
TO DRINK -- AND I DON'T MEAN BOTTLED WATER
LIKE PERRIER.

CPSC/DEC OF THE SECRETARY
RESPONSE INFORMATION

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ONCE, IN HIS LATER YEARS, CHURCHILL WAS INTRODUCED AT A DINNER BY A MODERATOR WHO MADE FUN OF HIS REPUTATION.

THE MODERATOR SAID, "IF ALL THE LIQUOR OUR SPEAKER HAD EVER DRUNK WAS POURED IN TO THE DINING HALL, IT WOULD PROBABLY COME HALFWAY UP TO THE CEILING."

WHEN CHURCHILL GOT UP, HE LOOKED AT THE WALL, THEN UP TO THE HIGH CEILING.

HE SAID, "SO LITTLE TIME, SO MUCH TO DO."

THERE IS SO MUCH I WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT TODAY.

LAST YEAR, I WAS PLEASED TO MEET DR. VEDRINE AND MANY OF YOU WHEN WE WELCOMED ECOSA TO THE UNITED STATES.

WHEN DR. VEDRINE GRACIOUSLY INVITED ME TO
COME TO PARIS - SHE DIDN'T HAVE TO ASK TWICE.

OF COURSE, FIRST I TOLD MY HUSBAND DONALD
ABOUT THE INVITATION.

DONALD IS A GOOD SPORT AND HE DIDN'T MIND
TOO MUCH THAT I WOULD BE COMING TO PARIS
WITHOUT HIM.

BUT HE DID REMIND ME ABOUT AN ANECDOTE
FROM OUR FRIEND ART BUCHWALD'S BOOK, "I'LL
ALWAYS HAVE PARIS."

BUCHWALD'S MEMOIR RECOUNTED SOME OF THE
FANTASTIC ADVENTURES HE HAD WHEN HE WAS A
COLUMNIST LIVING IN PARIS IN THE 1950'S AND 60'S
AND WRITING FOR THE HERALD TRIBUNE.

ART WOULD FREQUENTLY GET INVITED TO
EXCITING PLACES AROUND EUROPE -- AND HE
ALMOST ALWAYS LEFT HIS WIFE ANN AND THEIR
THREE CHILDREN AT HOME.

ONCE, HE WAS DOING SOME WORK THAT LED HIM
TO BE A GUEST ON ARISTOTLE ONASSIS' YACHT. AS
LUCK WOULD HAVE IT, THERE WAS A FANCY RED
CROSS BALL THAT NIGHT, AND ART WAS ASKED TO
ESCORT GINA LOLLOBRIGIDA TO THE BALL.

HE REALIZED HE BETTER WARN ANN. SO HE
CALLED AND TOLD HER THAT IF SHE SAW HIS
PICTURE IN THE PAPER THE NEXT MORNING WITH
GINA LOLLOBRIGIDA, HE WANTED HER TO KNOW, IT
WASN'T THAT HE WAS HAVING A GOOD TIME -- IT
WAS... STRICTLY BUSINESS.

(PAUSE)

IN THE UNITED STATES, AS YOU KNOW, WE ARE
IN THE MIDDLE OF OUR PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN.

I CAN TELL YOU THAT VICE PRESIDENT GORE
AND HIS WIFE TIPPER HAVE BEEN GREAT
SUPPORTERS OF CONSUMER SAFETY.

IN FACT, VICE PRESIDENT GORE SWORE ME IN
WHEN I BECAME CHAIRMAN OF THE U.S. CONSUMER
PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION.

THE GORES' SON WAS VERY BADLY INJURED IN
AN ACCIDENT WHEN HE WAS YOUNGER -- AND
PERHAPS FOR THAT REASON, THEY HAVE ALWAYS
BEEN VERY INVOLVED IN EFFORTS TO KEEP KIDS
SAFE.

TIPPER HELPED US OUT WITH ONE OF HER
FAVORITE SPORTS: INLINE SKATING.

IT'S A WONDERFUL SPORT, BUT AS IT HAS GAINED
IN POPULARITY, INJURIES HAVE SKYROCKETED.

SO WE URGE PEOPLE TO WEAR SAFETY GEAR -- A
HELMET, KNEE PADS, ELBOW PADS AND WRIST
GUARDS.

IT HELPED TREMENDOUSLY THAT, WHEN WE SET
OUT TO PUBLICIZE THIS ISSUE, TIPPER PUT ON ALL
HER GEAR AND WENT SKATING ON THE WASHINGTON
MONUMENT GROUNDS WITH A GROUP OF KIDS.

WE REALLY GOT ATTENTION FOR THAT STORY.
THERE WERE TV CAMERAS THERE, AND MAJOR
NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES AROUND THE
COUNTRY CARRIED A PICTURE OF TIPPER SKATING IN
HER SAFETY GEAR.

WE HAVE BEEN HELPED IN OUR WORK BY AN
ADMINISTRATION THAT CARES ABOUT CONSUMER
SAFETY.

WHEN AL GORE ANNOUNCED HIS VICE
PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE JOE LIEBERMAN LAST
MONTH, JOE TOLD A STORY I REALLY LIKED
ILLUSTRATING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO
POLITICAL PARTIES.

HE TOLD ABOUT THE VETERINARIAN AND THE
TAXIDERMIST IN TENNESSEE WHO OPENED AN
OFFICE TOGETHER.

THEIR SLOGAN: "EITHER WAY, YOU GET YOUR
DOG BACK."

AS A DOG LOVER, I COULD SEE THE DIFFERENCE
THERE.

AND AS CHAIRMAN OF CPSC, I CAN TELL YOU I
KNOW THE CLINTON-GORE ADMINISTRATION CARES
ABOUT FAMILIES AND SAFETY.

(PAUSE)

I KNOW TOO THAT YOU WHO ARE HERE TODAY
FEEL AS I DO - THAT WE WHO WORK ON PRODUCT
SAFETY ISSUES ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE
LIVES OF PEOPLE EVERY DAY.

ON THE EVE OF THE MILLENNIUM, I AM SURE
MANY OF YOU DID AS MY FAMILY AND I DID - WE
WATCHED TELEVISION TO SEE THE NEW
MILLENNIUM WELCOMED IN COUNTRIES ACROSS THE
GLOBE.

NOTHING WAS MORE MAGNIFICENT THAN THE
BRILLIANT FIREWORKS CASCADING OVER THE EIFFEL
TOWER.

BUT BECAUSE OF THE WORK WE DO, I LOOK AT
FIREWORKS A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY THAN MOST
VIEWERS.

WE HAVE A SLOGAN AT CPSC -- LEAVE
FIREWORKS TO THE PROFESSIONALS.

UNFORTUNATELY NOT EVERYONE LISTENS.

LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT A TWELVE YEAR OLD
BOY FROM CHICAGO, NAMED COLIN BURNS.

I MET HIM AT ONE OF OUR FOURTH OF JULY
PRESS CONFERENCES.

HE AND HIS FAMILY WERE SO EXCITED WHEN HIS
TEAM, THE CHICAGO BULLS WON THE NATIONAL
BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION CHAMPIONSHIP.

THEY TRIED TO SET OFF SOME FIREWORKS.

ONE EXPLODED. AND COLIN LOST HIS LEFT EYE.

IN 1999 THERE WERE ABOUT 8500 FIREWORKS
INJURIES TREATED IN HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOMS
IN THE UNITED STATES.

EVERY YEAR CHILDREN INJURE HANDS AND
FINGERS -- AND EYES.

COLIN AND HIS FAMILY CAME TO OUR PRESS
CONFERENCE TO SHOW PEOPLE JUST WHY THEY
SHOULD LEAVE FIREWORKS TO THE PROFESSIONALS.

HE WAS SUCH A GREAT KID -- BUT I HAVE TO
TELL YOU: HE STARTLED ME.

WE WERE TALKING BEFORE THE PRESS
CONFERENCE AND AT ONE POINT HE SAID,
"CHAIRMAN - HE THOUGHT MY FIRST NAME WAS
CHAIRMAN - CHAIRMAN, I WANT TO SHOW YOU
SOMETHING."

AND HE TOOK OUT HIS GLASS EYE.

MY LEGS ACTUALLY GOT RUBBERY. BUT I
STRUGGLED TO SEEM LIKE THE POISED GROWNUP I'M
SUPPOSED TO BE, AND I SAID, "TLL BET YOU DO THAT
TO ALL YOUR FRIENDS.

HE SAID, "YEP. IN CATECHISM CLASS I PUT MY
EYE ON THE SHOULDER OF THE BOY IN FRONT OF ME
AND SAY, 'I'VE GOT MY EYE ON YOU.'

NOW THAT'S SPIRIT!

IT'S THE KIND OF SPIRIT I LIKE TO THINK
CHARACTERIZES OUR WORK AT CPSC.

(PAUSE)

AT THIS CONFERENCE YOU WILL BE DISCUSSING
HOW INJURY AFFECTS DIFFERENT SECTORS OF THE
POPULATION IN DIFFERENT WAYS.

AT CPSC, WE CONSIDER THAT OUR MAIN JOB IS TO PROTECT OUR MOST VULNERABLE POPULATIONS -- AND ESPECIALLY CHILDREN.

CPSC'S MISSION IS TO SAVE LIVES AND REDUCE INJURIES TO AMERICAN FAMILIES.

EACH YEAR WE DEVOTE A LARGE SHARE OF OUR AGENCY'S RESOURCES TO PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM INJURY OR DEATH FROM CONSUMER PRODUCTS.

WE HAVE RECALLED 47 MILLION TOYS ALONE SO FAR THIS YEAR.

BUT OUR MISSION INVOLVES A LOT MORE THAN TOYS.

WE OVERSEE ABOUT 15,000 TYPES OF PRODUCTS THAT ADD PLEASURE TO LIFE FOR MOST, BUT CAN POSE DANGER TO SOME.

IN FACT, EACH YEAR THERE ARE OVER 29
MILLION INJURIES -- AND ABOUT 22,000 DEATHS
RELATED TO THOSE PRODUCTS.

KEEPING WATCH OVER THESE VARIOUS
PRODUCTS REQUIRES A STAFF OF SKILLED
PROFESSIONALS WHO HAVE BROAD KNOWLEDGE
AND AN ABILITY TO RESPOND QUICKLY WHEN
CONCERNS ARISE.

LET ME GIVE YOU AN EXAMPLE.

EARLIER THIS YEAR, WE SUDDENLY FOUND
OURSELVES IN THE MIDDLE OF A CONTROVERSY
ABOUT ASBESTOS IN CHILDREN'S CRAYONS.

A NEWSPAPER IN SEATTLE HAD DONE A SERIES
ABOUT CONSUMER PRODUCTS AND FOUND WHAT IT
SAID WAS ASBESTOS IN CRAYONS.

ABC NATIONAL NEWS FOUND THE SAME THING.

AND IT WAS NOT JUST IN ANY CRAYONS, BUT IN BRANDS LIKE CRAYOLA.

CRAYOLA'S TESTS SAID THERE WAS NO ASBESTOS.

THERE WAS MOUNTING INTEREST AND CONCERN.

EVERYONE WAS LOOKING TO US FOR ANSWERS.

WE DECIDED TO CONDUCT OUR OWN LABORATORY TESTS.

WE FOUND TRACE AMOUNTS OF ASBESTOS, FROM THE TALC THAT'S USED TO MANUFACTURE SOME OF THE CRAYONS.

AND WE FOUND LARGER AMOUNTS OF ASBESTOS-LIKE "TRANSITIONAL" FIBERS, WHICH ARE SIMILAR IN APPEARANCE TO ASBESTOS FIBERS.

OUR STAFF ESTIMATED THAT THE HEALTH RISK FROM THESE FIBERS WAS EXTREMELY LOW.

WE HAD NO BASIS FOR A RECALL, BUT WE WERE CONCERNED -- AFTER ALL, THESE WERE CHILDRENS' CRAYONS.

I GOT TOGETHER WITH THE HEAD OF THE CRAYOLA COMPANY -- NO LAWYERS, JUST HE AND I.

AND, BELIEVE ME, IT WASN'T EASY TO KEEP THE LAWYERS OUT OF THE ROOM.

I TOLD HIM ABOUT THE TEST RESULTS.

I SAID FOR CRAYONS THAT'S NOT GOOD ENOUGH.

IF YOU CAN'T TRUST CRAYOLA, AN ICON OF CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS, WHAT CAN YOU TRUST?

I ASKED HIM TO REFORMULATE THEIR CRAYONS
TO ELIMINATE THE USE OF TALC, TO GET RID OF THE
TRACE AMOUNTS OF ASBESTOS AND ASBESTOS-LIKE
FIBERS.

HE THOUGHT ABOUT IT, AND HE DECIDED THEY
WOULD.

THE OTHER COMPANIES FOLLOWED SUIT.

CPSC SENT OUT A PRESS RELEASE REASSURING
THE PUBLIC.

I PRAISED THE COMPANIES FOR GOING THE
EXTRA MILE.

CONSUMER GROUPS PRAISED THEM TOO, FOR
ELIMINATING EVEN THIS LOW RISK.

THE KIDS GOT TO KEEP THEIR CRAYONS.

AND WE DID OUR JOB -- KEEPING KIDS SAFE.

(PAUSE)

LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT ANOTHER RECENT
ACTIVITY AT CPSC - ONE THAT IS VERY MUCH
RELATED TO THE CENTRAL TOPIC OF THIS MEETING,
"SOCIAL INEQUALITIES IN INJURY RISKS."

EACH YEAR, MORE THAN 2,700 BABIES IN THE U.S.
DIE OF SIDS OR SUDDEN INFANT DEATH SYNDROME.

SIDS IS A SILENT, MYSTERIOUS AND TRAGIC
KILLER.

THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT SIDS DEATHS HAVE
COME DOWN BY ABOUT 40% IN THE U.S. SINCE 1992 -
BECAUSE WE HAVE BEEN ADVISING PARENTS TO
PLACE BABIES TO SLEEP ON THEIR BACKS.

BUT STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THAT AFRICAN-
AMERICAN BABIES ARE TWICE AS LIKELY TO DIE OF
SIDS AS OTHER BABIES.

ON JULY 19, CPSC RELEASED THE RESULTS OF A NEW SURVEY THAT SHOWED THAT AFRICAN-AMERICAN PARENTS WERE MORE LIKELY TO PLACE THEIR BABIES TO SLEEP IN WAYS THAT COULD INCREASE THE RISK OF SIDS.

- WE FOUND THAT MORE THAN HALF OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN PARENTS PLACE THEIR BABIES TO SLEEP NOT ON THEIR BACKS, BUT ON THEIR STOMACHS OR SIDES.
- WE ALSO FOUND THAT AFRICAN-AMERICANS ARE MORE LIKELY TO PLACE SOFT BEDDING SUCH AS QUILTS, COMFORTERS OR PILLOWS IN THE CRIB WITH THEIR INFANTS. THIS CAN INCREASE THE RISK OF SIDS FROM SUFFOCATION.

- ANOTHER DIFFERENCE THE SURVEY TURNED UP -- ALMOST HALF OF CAUCASIAN PARENTS SAY THEY GOT THEIR INFORMATION ABOUT SLEEP POSITION FROM A PHYSICIAN OR NURSE, WHILE AFRICAN-AMERICANS TEND TO GET SUCH INFORMATION MORE FROM FAMILY MEMBERS SUCH AS A GRANDMOTHER.

BECAUSE OF THESE SURVEY RESULTS, CPSC PUT TOGETHER A NEW "SAFE SLEEP" CAMPAIGN THAT ESPECIALLY TARGETS SAFETY INFORMATION TO AFRICAN-AMERICAN PARENTS.

AMONG OTHER THINGS, WE DEVELOPED A TELEVISION PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT WILL APPEAR ON BLACK ENTERTAINMENT TELEVISION -- A MAJOR NETWORK THAT REACHES THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY.

AND WE ARE WORKING THROUGH HEALTH
CLINICS TO GET THE WORD OUT TO AFRICAN-
AMERICAN PARENTS ABOUT HOW TO KEEP THEIR
BABIES SAFE FROM SIDS.

THIS IS AN INEQUALITY WE CAN DO SOMETHING
ABOUT.

(PAUSE)

TODAY, ALL OF OUR LIVES ARE INFLUENCED BY
THE INTERNET, WHETHER AT NIGHT WHEN WE SIT
DOWN TO E-MAIL FAMILY AND FRIENDS -- OR AT
WORK WHERE WE CONDUCT OUR BUSINESS WITH
THE CLICK OF A MOUSE.

CPSC SEARCHES THE INTERNET LOOKING FOR
UNSAFE GOODS.

WE GO AFTER THEM THROUGH OUR INTERNET
WATCHDOG -- OPERATION S-O-S, SAFE ONLINE
SHOPPING.

WE HAVE ALSO FOUND A NEW WAY TO WORK
WITH TWO LARGE INTERNET COMPANIES, E-BAY AND
AMAZON.COM

IN MARCH OF THIS YEAR WE ANNOUNCED A
PARTNERSHIP WITH THEM TO PREVENT HAZARDOUS
PRODUCTS FROM BEING SOLD ON THEIR AUCTION
SITES.

THEY NOW LINK WITH OUR WEBSITE AND ALERT
CONSUMERS TO CHECK FOR RECALLED PRODUCTS.

WE KNOW CONSUMERS ARE TAKING ADVANTAGE
OF THIS INFORMATION, BECAUSE OUR WEB TRAFFIC
IMMEDIATELY WENT UP BY OVER 25,000 USERS IN
THE FIRST MONTH WE LINKED WITH E-BAY.

WE HEAR SUCCESS STORIES ALL THE TIME.

RECENTLY, WE RECEIVED A LETTER FROM A
CONSUMER -- LET ME QUOTE FROM IT:

*THE LINK TO E-BAY IS A TERRIFIC THING TO HAVE
STARTED.*

*I WAS BIDDING ON AN E-BAY ITEM, AND THEY NOW
GIVE A WARNING TO CHECK YOUR WEBSITE BEFORE
BIDDING OR SELLING ANY CHILDREN'S ITEMS...IT'S
WONDERFUL. I WENT TO YOUR SITE AND FOUND THAT
THE FISHER PRICE SWING WE WERE USING FOR OUR
SEVEN-MONTH OLD HAD BEEN RECALLED JUST LAST
WEEK. I WOULD'VE NEVER FOUND OUT OTHERWISE.*

IF YOU SEE UNSAFE TOYS FOR SALE ON THE
INTERNET, WE HOPE YOU WILL ACT AS WELL.

WE ARE GOING AFTER THESE INTERNET SALES
WITH GOOD REASON.

(PAUSE)

ALL OF US IN THIS ROOM -- NO MATTER WHAT WE DO OR WHO WE WORK FOR -- ARE CONSUMERS, TOO.

AND BECAUSE I FEEL SO STRONGLY ABOUT THAT, I CAN'T CLOSE WITHOUT TELLING YOU ABOUT SOMETHING THAT HAS IMPRESSED ME MORE AND MORE OVER THE YEARS I'VE HELD THIS POSITION: HOW MANY PEOPLE WHO HAVE SUFFERED THE MOST TERRIBLE PERSONAL TRAGEDIES, FIND MEANING IN HELPING OTHERS.

I KNOW THIS BECAUSE OVER THE YEARS I HAVE BEEN AT CPSC, I HAVE MADE A POINT OF TELEPHONING PARENTS WHO HAVE LOST A CHILD IN AN INCIDENT INVOLVING A CONSUMER PRODUCT.

PICKING UP THE PHONE ISN'T EASY. I WORRY ABOUT INTRUDING ON THEIR PRIVATE GRIEF.

I'VE FOUND, THOUGH, THAT PARENTS ARE NOT ONLY RECEPTIVE, BUT HAVE VOLUNTEERED TO HELP SOLVE THE SAFETY PROBLEMS THAT CAUSED THEIR CHILD'S DEATH.

I THINK OF A WOMAN NAMED LYNN STARKS, IN OKLAHOMA CITY.

SHE WENT TO WAKE HER THREE-YEAR OLD DAUGHTER WHITNEY ONE MORNING, TO FIND THAT WHITNEY HAD WIGGLED HER BODY BETWEEN THE TOP SLATS OF THE UPPER BUNK OF HER BUNK BED. BUT HER HEAD GOT CAUGHT.

HER MOTHER FOUND HER HANGING, HER BODY RIGID, COLD AND BLUE.

LYNN WANTED TO ENSURE THAT HER DAUGHTER'S DEATH WOULDN'T BE IN VAIN.

SHE WORKED WITH US ON OUR RECALL, SHE
WENT ON THE POPULAR TV MORNING SHOW "GOOD
MORNING AMERICA" WITH ME -- SHE GOT THE
OKLAHOMA STATE LEGISLATURE TO PASS A LAW
ELIMINATING THE SALE OF UNSAFE BUNK BEDS IN
OKLAHOMA.

AND THE CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY
COMMISSION APPROVED A NEW MANDATORY BUNK
BED RULE THAT WILL PREVENT PEOPLE FROM
MARKETING UNSAFE BEDS LIKE THE ONE THAT
KILLED WHITNEY STARKS.

(PAUSE)

WE'LL NEVER KNOW WHOSE LITTLE SON OR
DAUGHTER LYNN, OR COLIN SAVED.

THAT'S ALWAYS THE CASE WITH SAFETY ISSUES.

YOU DON'T SEE NEWSPAPER ARTICLES ABOUT
THE LITTLE GIRL WHO DIDN'T DIE IN A BUNK BED...

OR THE BOY WHO WASN'T INJURED BY
FIREWORKS.

BUT THEY ARE OUT THERE.

AND THE FACT IS, THEY ARE OUT THERE IN
INCREASING NUMBERS BECAUSE OF THE WORK WE
DO.

THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE LAST FEW YEARS
ARE THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF ALL OF US, WORKING
TOGETHER ACROSS NATIONAL BOUNDARIES.

OUR JOB WILL NEVER BE DONE -- BUT WE CAN
MAKE PROGRESS IN PROTECTING THE MOST
VULNERABLE AMONG US.

IN A FEW YEARS, IF I HAVE A CHANCE TO SPEAK
TO YOU AGAIN -- I'M CONFIDENT WE'LL BE ABLE TO
POINT TO MORE EXAMPLES OF THE LIFESAVING
THINGS WE HAVE DONE.

AND AS YOU CONTINUE YOUR WORK IN YOUR
VARIOUS COUNTRIES, PLEASE REMEMBER, THAT,
LIKE 12 YEAR OLD COLIN, "I'VE GOT MY EYE ON YOU."

TO ANY WHO MIGHT FEEL WE CAN REST ON OUR
LAURELS, I REMIND YOU OF HOW MANY CHILDREN
WILL BE KILLED OR INJURED IN ALL OUR
COUNTRIES IN THE NEXT FEW HOURS.

AS WINSTON CHURCHILL SAID, "SO LITTLE TIME,
SO MUCH TO DO."

THANK YOU.